

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 1, 4-6, 9-13 and 16-21. Applicant respectfully submits no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Titus, et al., Pub. No.US2002/0029189 A1. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

The Titus reference appears to disclose a system for applying a real-time billing charge for messages transmitted over a TCP/IP network (Abstract). Titus is cited for linking at least one supplementary service to a PPS account wherein a tariff table for the supplementary service includes a rate comprising a periodic charge associated with a predetermined time period. The Applicant has reviewed the cited portions of the Titus reference. The cited portions disclose a prepaid short messaging service able to stand alone or bundled with other applications: a prepaid tariff engine that bills according to flat rate, time of day, day of week character count, etc., and the prepaid messaging service bills the mobile account according to the tariff computed by the tariff engine.

The Applicant's invention discloses linking supplementary services to a PPS account wherein a tariff table includes a rate for periodic charges for the supplementary services. Typically, a prepaid account is charged based on time units. The present invention discloses charging a specified amount to the PPS account for supplementary services at the end of a timed period, i.e., a month. This procedure allows charging for monthly services in a prepaid account that heretofore could not be charged because of the time unit based charging. The supplementary services are services associated with voice traffic and include call forwarding, call waiting, call blocking and caller ID (Para. 7).

The Titus reference discloses the use of a prepaid short messaging server that includes an SMS account database, prepaid SMS application and a prepaid SMS tariff

engine. The prepaid SMS server in Titus applies charging functions to messages and does not appear to apply charging functions to call forwarding, call blocking or caller id services.

The Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to amended claim 1.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a prepaid subscriber (PPS) account in a telecommunication system, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a credit balance in said PPS account;

linking at least one supplementary service, wherein said at least one supplementary service is charged, either daily, weekly or monthly, to said PPS account and includes one of call forwarding, call blocking and caller ID, wherein a tariff table for said at least one supplementary service includes a rate comprising a periodic charge associated with a predetermined time period;

determining that said predetermined time period associated with said supplementary service is complete; and

applying said associated periodic charge to said PPS account.

(emphasis added)

The Applicant respectfully asserts that the Titus reference does not teach or suggest all of the emphasized limitations in amended claim 1.

In addition to providing a method for applying monthly charges to a prepaid account, Applicant also discloses a separate tariff (lookup) table that lists a set fee associated with a particular time period (month, week, day). The fee is applied to the prepaid account if the specified period has passed. Titus's tariff engine computes real time charges based on message count, time of day, character count, etc. which are applied to the prepaid account (Abstract). There is no need for computing in the Applicant's invention as the fees are predetermined and linked to the detection of the end of the month timer signal. The timer indicates when a month passes and the invention deducts the monthly charge from the prepaid account.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the Titus reference does not disclose a monthly periodic charge to the prepaid subscriber account associated with the supplementary services described above. The Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of amended claim 1.

Amended claims 9 and 16 are analogous to amended claim 1 and contain similar limitations. The applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1, 9, and 16 and the respective depending claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter as the invention. Claims 4 and 6 have been amended to correct the vague and indefinite problem and the antecedent basis problem.

Prior Art Not Relied Upon

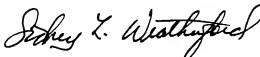
In paragraph 6 on page 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the Applicant's disclosure.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sidney L. Weatherford", written in a cursive style.

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